



On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back

Stacey Dooley

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The Sunday Times Bestseller

Put yourself in their shoes.

In 2007, Stacey Dooley was a twenty-something working in fashion retail. She was selected to take part in the BBC series *Blood, Sweat and T-Shirts* which saw her live and work alongside Indian factory workers making clothes for the UK High Street. This sparked her series of hugely popular investigations, establishing her as one of BBC3's most celebrated presenters.

Through the course of her documentary making, Stacey has covered a variety of topics, from sex trafficking in Cambodia, to Yazidi women fighting back in Syria. At the core of her reporting are incredible women in extraordinary and scarily ordinary circumstances – from sex workers in Russia, to victims of domestic violence in Honduras. In her first book, *On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back*, Stacey draws on her encounters with these brave and wonderful women, using their experiences as a vehicle to explore issues at the centre of female experience. From gender equality and domestic violence, to sex trafficking and sexual identity, Stacey weaves these global strands together in an exploration of what it is to be women in the world today.

On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back Details

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Author : Stacey Dooley

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From Reader Review On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back for online ebook

Kate Henderson says

Listened via audible. Loved it!! Stacey relived a lot of moments from her various documentaries over the last 10 years. But she also gave added insight.

Wish it was longer and more in depth felt like she was only skimming the service.

Loved her narration. Felt so calming and like talking to a friend.

Really easy yet powerful listen!

Michelle B says

I remember watching Stacey on her the first BBC programme in which she appeared, "Blood, Sweat and TShirts". I liked her instantly; her straightforward talking, innocence and naivety. I have watched several more of her documentaries over the years and like how she has retained her own style whilst growing in intelligence and as a woman.

She writes well in her own voice (I assume with the aide of a ghostwriter).

The book documents some of stories of the women whom Stacey has met on her travels with work who have featured in her documentaries. The chapters are broken down into subject areas each covering a topic dealt with in a documentary. Although I have not seen many of the documentaries Stacey talks of, I was able visualise both of the people and the places because of Stacey's descriptions.

It is a well written, interesting, if a bit short, book which I would highly recommend. Like Stacey, it made me grateful I am a woman living in the UK rather than elsewhere in the world where women are not respected in a way we take here as normal.

Thanks to NetGalley for providing me with a Kindle copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Amy Hamilton says

Full disclaimer, I've loved Stacey Dooley and her documentaries for years so I was really excited to see she was going to be publishing a memoir discussing her time making documentaries. I actually consumed this through the audiobook version of the book which is narrated by Dooley herself which I found really entertaining. Overall, this book is thought provoking and has an important integral message to it - women are hit harder by global problems than men (women includes trans-women and sex workers).

My only problem I had with the book was that Dooley referred to many women who had gone through extreme trauma and difficult situations as 'Girls' which I found really condescending and patronising considering the gravity of most of their situations, let alone their ages. She also used the word 'prostitute' often which did not sit right with me as I'm aware the preferred term is 'sex worker'.

That being said, I found this entertaining. It was a quick listen (just over 7 hours) and educational. I don't think you'd have to be a Dooley fan to enjoy this book, it was brilliant.

Bronte Harris says

Fantastic book

I loved this book, and even though I've seen all of Stacey's documentaries it was like re-watching them through a new set of eyes. The chapters are quite long but necessary to give enough time to each story. Stacey does a fantastic job of maintaining her down to earth presenting style throughout the book and it's so easy to read. The things these poor people have been through are shocking and upsetting and the book helps shine a light on those that need support the most. Would recommend 100%

Michelle says

'While her two young daughters watched, he went for her with the machete and hacked off one of her legs at the ankle and the other mid-calf, leaving her with two bloody stumps and a massive gash across one thigh. He made sure she couldn't leave. She literally couldn't walk away.'

'The girls were my number one priority. You need to be able to look at yourself in a mirror at the end of a day's filming and feel totally happy with how you've treated those around you. You have to ask yourself, If I were in their situation, would I feel like I've been treated with respect?'

On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back tells the stories of Heydi, Sylvia, Tee, Shereen and so many other women and girls. Stacey Dooley, BBC investigative reporter, has been making documentaries on human rights violations for the last ten years. Her book chronicles the amazing girls and women she has met and their stories, raising awareness of hard-hitting and complex issues around the globe.

Reading this book has brought forward frustration and anger at the state of the world. Harrowing, heart-breaking, mind-blowing, dark, shocking and unacceptable. Domestic abuse, femicide, rape, child sexual abuse, sex workers, reproductive rights - this book covers it all. Horrific violence against women. Sometimes it barely felt like we scratched the surface, other chapters worked really well. However, the women never stopped fighting for their rights.

Stacey offers something different on TV - she is a young woman from a working-class background. *On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back* is Stacey's voice through and through. She is compassionate, emphatic and inquisitive. She is direct and not afraid to express her opinion, and acknowledges that we live in a complex world that rarely is black and white. I found this nuance important. Looking to learn more about violence against women? This is a great introductory book for you.

Loobyz says

Strong and poignant

Wow what a book. It delves deep into what is happening everywhere and doesn't stop at certain points but del

established even deeper than most journalists would, giving a perspective from every angle. It's very moving, heart breaking and soul delving.

Rob says

I knew I was going to love this; I'm a massive fan of Stacey Dooley and as soon as I saw she'd released a book I knew I needed the audiobook version.

Her writing voice is accessible and absorbing, and her speaking voice is friendly and charming. The women featured in the book I've seen before in Stacey's countless fantastic documentaries and to hear more about their lives and Stacey's feelings towards their situations was super compelling.

I'll definitely be recommending this to people.

Flapper72 says

I have always liked Stacey Dooley's documentaries. Almost felt that I probably wasn't really her target audience (female - yes, rather too old though) but liked her very personal way of dealing with extremely difficult environments. This book is written exactly as she presents her documentaries; personable, friendly, approachable and very honest. She gives a resume of the important woman she has met during her various adventures and her feelings about the situations they have found themselves in and how she has understood why they have taken the paths they have. Well worth a read.

Emma-Hope Newitt says

loved it, really inspiring and uplifting read!

Schizanthus says

I've followed Stacey's career from fashion loving teen travelling to India through to the professional journalist she is today, watching and rewatching every documentary each time they've aired on television. When I first heard she was releasing a book I was so keen to get my hands on it ASAP. I read the blurb and immediately thought of DVD Special Features. I imagined Stacey's book as a combination of Deleted Scenes and Director's Commentary, but it was so much more.

What I love about Stacey's work with social issues women face around the world is that she gives you information about emotionally loaded topics in a thoughtful and respectful way. You don't just get to hear her opinion; you learn about people whose lives that issue directly effects as a victim, their family and friends, along with any officials in the area or perpetrators that are willing to be interviewed.

Stacey and her team focus on some locations and issues that I was vaguely familiar with and others that sadly I had practically no knowledge of. In this book Stacey delves into issues relating to prison, immigration,

drugs, child abuse, femicide, high-end to low-end prostitution, trans prostitution, abortion, child sexualisation, murder, war and survival. Your heart will be broken and warmed by the womens' stories. For women who have had to survive such horrendous circumstances in their past and oftentimes present as well, their courage and resilience are extraordinary and inspirational. It's up to you as the reader to form your own opinions about what's presented to you and whether that will change your mind or not, but you cannot walk away uninformed. I hope you also walk away with your empathy enlarged.

Whenever someone starts talking politics my brain goes into standby mode so I was really surprised that Stacey could explain political issues to me, including what Obama stood for versus Trump, and I not only heard her but I understood what she was saying. Don't get me wrong; I'll never understand American politics. However Stacey explained policies and the way people are affected by them in such a down to earth way that I knew what she was talking about and if she'd done nothing else in this book, she'd deserve a medal for that alone!

Having seen most of the documentaries that Stacey refers to in *On the Front Line with the Women Who Fight Back* I could picture the people and scenes she was referring to, as well as hearing her voice in my head as I read. I was enjoying reliving some of my favourite documentaries with additional information and insights, yet wondered how well this book would translate to readers who have been living under a TV-less rock and hadn't seen any Stacey documentaries.

Then I came across a chapter featuring [Shock! Horror!] a documentary I had never seen before! In hindsight I'm pleased about that because not only do I have a documentary to watch in the very near future ? but it also gave me another perspective on this book. I found it didn't matter that I didn't have previous knowledge of this documentary. The writing sucked me in and in a way I felt like I was watching along as Stacey described what was happening. I understood the need for a documentary on that topic to be made in the first place, the experiences of the people interviewed, information about the political atmosphere at the time in that country and Stacey's own view.

While watching the documentary prior to reading each chapter is certainly not a prerequisite it is nice to be able to put faces to names. If, like me, you find gaps in your documentary viewing experience I expect that you'll come away with a viewing list to complement what you've read. While there are currently some of Stacey's documentaries available for viewing on the BBC website I would love to see (if it doesn't already exist) all of the documentaries mentioned in this book available for viewing at a central location.

I found I liked the same things about Stacey's approach in her writing that I do when I watch her on television. She's so down to earth. There's at once a sweetness and strength to her manner. She knows what she believes but isn't close minded when she hears opposing opinions; she'll weigh them against her own to determine if what someone else thinks changes her mind or strengthens her own views. Whether she agrees or disagrees with someone she treats them with respect. She asks the questions you want the answers to but aren't sure if anyone will have the guts to ask.

She gets to the heart of the issue and the people she's interviewing. You can tell she has a genuine fondness for the girls she encounters and her friendliness appears to open people up to having real conversations with her about difficult and painful things. Scared or not, she gets on with it. As a viewer and now a reader there's just something innately likeable and relatable about this woman and when you watch her documentaries it's easy to think, 'Yeah, I reckon Stacey and I could be mates if we ever met'.

While you may see the problems presented in this book and feel overwhelmed by their enormity, ultimately this book is a call to action. You are left to consider the power that you have to make a difference. To borrow

some of Stacey's words, what she's doing in this book and her documentaries is raising awareness and presenting "what's going on in the world so that people can make up their own minds about how best to fight back."

Thank you so much to NetGalley, BBC Books and Penguin Random House UK, Ebury Publishing for the opportunity to read this book. I'm left feeling inspired!

Bobbi says

This book adds another dimension to Stacey's previous documentaries, her writing style is effortless and very easy to read. The book is harrowing and eye opening, I would definitely recommend giving it a read.

Lucy Langford says

3.5**

I am absolutely obsessed with Stacey Dooley's documentaries and have followed her work for quite a few years... so when I heard she was releasing a book I was ecstatic !

This book follows the many women she has met during her travels across the world. The women she meets usually come from impoverished conditions and have had to deal with horrifying events, something very different to how I live my every day life.

Stacey gives such an important voice to these women, she gives them a chance to be heard through her documentaries, and raises awareness of the conditions these women face. A lot of her documentaries, while fascinating, will make you uncomfortable but also absolutely in awe of how resilient and brave these women are.

Some of the most shocking chapters are statistics of femicide in Honduras, the lack of sexual health information, no allowance of abortions- has lead to large increases in girls at the age of 13 or younger having babies. Stacey's book raises a real awareness of how First Nation people in Canada have been treated and the disappearances and murders of girls from First Nation areas (often largely in poverty, being pushed to the edge of society). She gives women the chance to tell their stories of prostitution, facing Isis, being in jail, being trans, lack of abortion rights, child abuse (both through online grooming, sexual and physical) and many more other accounts.

There are so many parts of this book I could continue to talk about, but the reader (or watcher) should see the documentaries/ read the book to experience and listen to these important stories themselves.

The reason why I have given this 3 stars is because I already obsessively watched the documentaries of which the chapters are based on- so there wasn't a lot of new information I hadn't already heard. However, the good thing about the book is that it developed more on Stacey as a person, and as a young reporter, how she felt listening to and filming the stories of these women, you could also feel the warmth and praise she gives these women and how they too treated her well and explained their stories.

If you have access to her documentaries I would definitely recommend that you watch them! They are so informational and inspiring and give voices to women who might otherwise not be heard.

Lee Johnson says

OK I will be totally honest, I knew nothing of Stacey Dooley before seeing her on Strictly Come Dancing (yes I know). I think it is sad that she is now getting abuse from some quarters for doing 'light' entertainment as opposed to her previous work.

After reading this I am going to seek out her documentaries as some of the things featured in this book are absolutely incredible.

An excellent book, from someone who has experienced some incredibly distressing scenes, but also met ladies who have come out the other side fighting (some literally).

Grace says

I'm a big fan of Stacey's documentaries and always used to watch them on bbc3. This book was really about Stacey's life, the many documentaries she has done and a bit of behind the scenes info from them. It was really fascinating. I would like to read more of her work and in all honesty she could publish a whole book on each of the adventures she has been on, I would like to hear about them in more detail. The only downside was there were a few repeats in the book, a few spelling and grammar errors and it just felt like it hadn't been edited quite enough. This didn't stop me enjoying it or giving it 5 stars though.

Kim says

Stacey Dooley is an unexpected serious journalist and documentary maker. As she says herself, she is a girl from Luton who spent her wages of clothes and having fun. Until she didn't any more. Until she became aware of where all the fashion she enjoyed came from, and at what cost. And then began the awakening that has resulted in this important docu-journalist telling essential stories.

I have seen some of her documentaries and I think they work as television because she is not your average journalist - instead she is your average woman. She speaks in a way we can all understand. We all were her, or are her.

This book works equally as well.

Each chapter is about one of the women she met during the making of a documentary. As such, each chapter gives a little more depth to the documentary and, if you have not seen it, makes the reader want to. I know i am going to be binge watching everything she has done now.

Her casual tone and chatty way of speaking makes the hard issues she is actually talking about more stark, more awful and more relevant. She is not preaching - she is just telling you what she thinks and believes. And that is powerful.

A good book worth reading whether you want to watch the documentaries or not. But do - they are worth

your time
